

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-15 are pending in the above-identified application. Claim 4 has been amended.

Claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Asay et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,903,882). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants submit that *Asay* does not disclose "a link correlating at least two certificates including a public key certificate which stores a public key serving as a cryptographic key and which is generated by a first certificate authority, and a person identification certificate which stores a template serving as person identification data and which is generated by a second certificate authority, thereby specifying one related certificate based on the other certificate", as recited in claim 1.

In asserting that *Asay* purportedly teaches claim 1, the Examiner points to Col. 1 lines 66-67 and Column 2, lines 1-20. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner is incorrect. *Asay* teaches that the digital signature of a public key certificate can be verified by further reference to another public key, whose signature may then be verified by yet another public key, and so on. This is illustrated in Fig. 2 of *Asay*, which shows the linking between various public key certificate authorities. *Asay* does not, however, teach or suggest a link that correlates a public key certificate to a person identification certificate which stores a template serving as person identification data. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claim 1 is allowable, as well as dependent claims 2-9. For similar reasons, Applicants submit that claims 10-15 are also allowable.

Applicants also respectfully submit that, in addition to the reasons discussed above, claim 4 is further allowable because the cited art does not teach or suggest storing data that "includes a validity period for the respective certificates" and that "a group validity period is set

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to be equal to the shortest validity period of those of the certificates related to each other." This feature is discussed in the specification at pages 44 and 45.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Dated: January 26, 2006

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